

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-05 L-01 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /059 W

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R 011905Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5321

SECDEF

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T LONDON 14299

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, UK, NATO

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF UK REPLY TO DPQ (74)

REF: USNATO 4362

1. EMBASSY HAS REVIEWED UK REPLY TO DPQ(74). WE CONSIDER REPLY FULLY CONSISTENT WITH INTERNAL BRITISH PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND TO OUR KNOWLEDGE FACTUAL.

2. TWO CAVEATS ARE OBVIOUS AND HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN THE BRITISH REPLY: THE DEFENSE REVIEW NOW APPEARS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO HAVE A MEASURABLE IMPACT ON BRITAIN'S NATO-COMMITTED FORCES AND, IF MAJOR CUTS ARE MADE COULD SERIOUSLY DEGRADE FORCE CAPABILITY WITHIN THE PLANNING PERIOD; SECONDLY, BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC FUTURE IS AT BEST UNCERTAIN, AND RENEWED LABOR PROBLEMS OR AN ENERGY SQUEEZE COULD UPSET CONDITIONS GENERALLY AND DISLOCATE PLANNED MILITARY PROGRAMS IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONGER TERM.

3. BOTH NAVY AND AIR FORCE PROGRAMS APPEAR TO BE ON THE SCHEDULE FORECAST IN THE BRITISH REPLY. ARMY DATA ALSO

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IS GENERALLY ACCURATE, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS EXIST AND MIGHT WELL MERIT QUESTIONING:

- RESERVE RECRUITING/RETENTION APPEARS DIFFICULT
(TAVR STRENGTH IS ONLY 73 PERCENT OF ESTABLISHED
QUOTA)

- OFFICER RECRUITMENT IS OFF, PARTICULARLY FOR EN-
GINEERS. HOW IS THIS PROBLEM BEING ATTACKED?

- SOME REEQUIPMENT PROGRAMS ARE SLIPPING (E.G. SCMI-
TAR WITH ITS GUN DIFFICULTIES, SPARTAN, AND LANCE -
FOR WHICH A STRETCHOUT IS NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH
DOD). HOW WILL THESE PROBLEMS AFFECT REEQUIPMENT
SCHEDULES FOR THESE WEAPONS.

4. BRITAIN HISTORICALLY HAS PUT ITS TRUST IN SMALL, WELL
EQUIPPED AND HIGHLY TRAINED FORCES WHOSE QUALITY HAS COM-
PENSATED FOR THEIR SMALL NUMBERS. OUR CONCERN IS THAT
INCIPIENT PROCUREMENT, RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING PROBLEMS
NOT BE ALLOWED TO ERODE THE HIGH QUALITY OF MILITARY FOR-
CES BRITAIN NOW FIELDS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, COLLECTIVE SECURITY, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON14299
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740314-0473
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741179/aaaacplk.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: USNATO 4362
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <07-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REVIEW OF UK REPLY TO DPQ (74)
TAGS: MCAP, UK, NATO
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005